Money given for advertisements to fictitious firms

2180. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that vast sums of money were given to fictitious media firms and media productions by Government during 2002-03 and 2003-04 for publicity on rural development programmes;

(b) the details of steps proposed to retrieve the money given in the years 2002-03 and 2003-04; and

(c) the details of penal action taken against such firms which got the money?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): (a) No, Sir. During 2002-03 and 2003-04 payments have only been made to AIR, Prasar Bharati, Directorate of Audio Visual Publicity (DAVP) and empanelled Audio/Video producers on the basis of actual service rendered by them for undertaking publicity activities on various Rural Development Programmes.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Special scheme for development of land and conservation of water

†2181. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to start any special scheme for the development of land, protection from drought and flood and conservation of water;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how far this programme is different from the programme of 'food for work'; and

(d) by when the scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. NARENDRA): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Rural Development has launched a new poverty alleviation programme namely the National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) with 100% funding during the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

current financial year *i.e.* 2004-05 from the month of November, 2004 in 150 most backward districts of the country to generate additional supplementary wage employment with food security. All the States except Goa have been covered under the programme. The programme is open to all rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual and unskilled work. Foodgrains to the States are also provided free of cost. During the current financial year *i.e.* 2004-05, the allocation under this programme is Rs. 2020 crore cash component and 20 lakh tonnes of foodgrains. The focus of the programme will be on works relating to water conservation, drought proofing (including afforestation/tree plantation) and land development. Flood control/protection (including drainage in water-logged areas), rural connectivity in terms of all weather roads and other similar activity for economic sustainability, keeping in view the area specific problems, may also be taken up.

The erstwhile Food for Work Programme (FFWP) was under operation between January 2001 to March 2002. Under this programme, only foodgrains were provided to the calamity affected areas in order to provide additional supplementary wage employment to minimize hardship. The cash component of wages and material cost was to be met by the concerned State Governments from their own resources under various ongoing developmental/welfare schemes. As such the scheme was to be implemented through convergence/dovetailing with other programmes. But the NFFWP is a compact scheme having resources for both the components of the wages (cash and foodgrains) and cash component for material cost as well. Besides, the NFFWP is allocation based programme whereas FFWP was demand driven.

Implementation of E.A.S.

2182. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been implementing Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) through State/Union Territories administrations across the country;

(b) if so, the salient features of EAS;

(c) the State-wise and year-wise details of funds allotted towards implementation of EAS and records of its implementation since inception, including number of population benefited;